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CIA 104 Agee, Philip

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Date. 14 Jan 77

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(orig under Agee)

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AGEE DENIES EXPOSING SPY RING TO RUSSIA

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(TEXT) BY PA STAFF REPORTER--PHILIP AGEE, THE FORMER CIA AGENT UNDER THREAT OF DEPORTATION FROM BRITAIN, TODAY DENIED BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPOSURE TO THE RUSSIANS OF A LARGE NATO SPY RING OPERATING UNDER BRITISH CONTROL IN POLAND.

A STORY IN A LOS ANGELES NEWSPAPER SAID THE CIA WAS BLAMING MR AGEE FOR DISCLOSING THE SPY RING.

BUT AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN LONDON DURING A BREAK IN THE PRIVATE HEARING OF HIS APPEAL TO A HOME OFFICE APPOINTED ADVISORY PANEL AGAINST DEPORTATION, MR AGEE SAID THE STORY WAS AN ATTEMPT BY THE CIA TO "PIN THIS ON HIM." HE SAID IT WAS A CONTINUATION OF SOMETHING THE CIA HAD BEEN TRYING TO DO SINCE JANUARY LAST YEAR.

HE SAID HE HAD TOLD THE ADVISORY PANEL THAT A POLISH FENCER CALLED PAWLOWSKI WAS ARRESTED IN JUNE 1975; THIS ARREST WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN FOLLOWED BY THE ARREST OF ANOTHER 120 PEOPLE. PAWLOWSKI WAS SAID TO HAVE BEEN AT THE 1968 OLYMPICS WHICH MR AGEE ATTENDED FOR THE CIA.

These comments represent the initial and tentative reaction of the CIA Operations Center and of the appropriate analytic component in the Agency.

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AGEE

NEW YORK (AP) -- U.S. INTELLIGENCE SOURCES SAY THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY BELIEVES THAT PHILIP AGEE, ONE OF THE AGENCY'S FORMER AGENTS, DISCLOSED TO THE RUSSIANS THE EXISTENCE OF A LARGE NATO SPY RING OPERATING UNDER BRITISH CONTROL IN POLAND, NEWSDAY REPORTED TODAY.

THE RING INCLUDED SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT FIGURES IN POLAND AND WAS BROKEN UP IN JUNE 1975 BY SOVIET KGB (SECRET POLICE) AGENTS AND POLISH COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, NEWSDAY SAID. BRITISH INTELLIGENCE HELPED SOME MEMBERS OF THE RING GET OUT OF POLAND BEFORE IT WAS SMASHED, THE NEWSPAPER SAID, WHILE OTHER MEMBERS WERE ARRESTED AND CHARGED WITH SPYING.

AGEE SAID THURSDAY IN LONDON THAT HE KNEW NOTHING ABOUT THE SPY RING CASE, NEWSDAY REPORTED.

AN OPEN CRITIC OF THE CIA, AGEE NOW LIVES AND WORKS IN LONDON. HE HAS BEEN ORDERED DEPORTED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND IS APPEALING THE ORDER. HE HAS CHARGED THAT U.S. PRESSURE IS BEHIND THE EXPULSION ORDER, BUT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED ANY U.S. INFLUENCE IN THE CASE.

THE BRITISH HAVE REFUSED TO ELABORATE ON THEIR ALLEGATIONS OF LAST NOVEMBER THAT THE 41-YEAR-OLD AGEE HAS MADE HARMFUL CONTACTS WITH FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN DISSEMINATING INFORMATION HARMFUL TO BRITISH SECURITY.

HOWEVER, THE SOURCES SAID, ACCORDING TO NEWSDAY, THAT THE DEPORTATION ORDER WAS ISSUED AFTER THE CIA TOLD BRITISH INTELLIGENCE IT BELIEVED AGEE HAD A HAND IN EXPOSING THE SPY RING THAT WAS MAINLY UNDER BRITISH CONTROL.

THE RING WAS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE LEADING OPERATIONS EVER FORMED BY WESTERN INTELLIGENCE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN, NEWSDAY SAID, AND WESTERN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES BELIEVE IT WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL IN OBTAINING INFORMATION ON SOVIET AND WARSAW PACT MILITARY DISPOSITIONS IN POLAND.